

# PYTHAGORAS

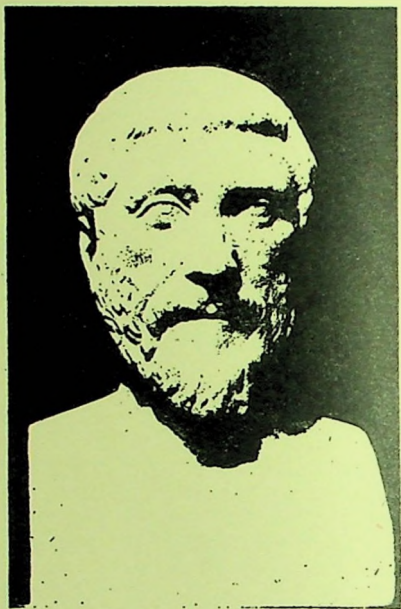
by

LESLIE RALPH



LONDON

# PYTHAGORAS



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# PYTHAGORAS

A short account of his life and philosophy

By

LESLIE RALPH

*With a Foreword by  
H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece*

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**Philosophical works by the same author.**

**The Ocean of Life.**

**The Grecian Buddha.**

**The Metapontine Letters.**

**The Samian Apollo.**

**The Arcana Corvida.**

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*I dedicate this little book  
to my Good Friend*

**NICOLAS P. PARASCHIS**

## FOREWORD

BY

H.R.H. PRINCE PETER OF GREECE, M.A., LL.D., PH.D.

Mr. Leslie Ralph is eminently qualified to write about Pythagoras. He has made a special study of the ancient Greek philosopher and mathematician during the last twenty-five years, is himself a Pythagorean in his own right in the 20th century, and has received a silver medal for Pythagorean philosophy from the City of Paris at the occasion of the World Congress of Pythagorean Organisations in 1955.

He concludes his introduction to the present publication with the words: "Pythagoras was a truly great man whose philosophy has influenced mankind through the centuries. His attempt to reconcile science and religion, his advice to follow a middle path between extremes of thought and action, his intense humanity are examples of which the world stands in urgent need to-day." He adds: "Time has not outdated the principles he represented and this is perhaps the finest compliment one can pay to the memory of any great leader."

The author thus touches upon something of which we are, most of us, usually unaware, namely that in our everyday behaviour, in the forms of speech which we use in our civilization, we employ terms and concepts which were originally created and put into practice by Pythagoras. It is because they are now commonplace and have become so familiar that we take them for granted. It was the founder of the Pythagorean School who first invented, for instance, the appellations "philosopher" and "mathematics," as well as the disciplines associated with these two terms. He was also an outstanding moralist, a social reformer and a scientist, following here in the steps of his master, Thales of Miletus, a fellow Ionian.

Starting his teaching career in the Italic part of Greece when already in his fifties, Pythagoras liked to consider himself a seeker of wisdom. As Mr. Leslie Ralph tells us, he was wont to recommend to those around him to bear in mind that "fate cannot send the greatest measure of ill-fortune to a wise man." Yet, he was himself to perish lamentably, after seeing his School decimated and his followers massacred in the land of his adoption. He had earlier escaped from the intolerable political climate created in his native Samos by the extraordinary and apparently unwarranted good fortune of Polykrates the



tyrant a man whose ruthless activities were inspired by anything but wisdom.

But then, Pythagoras was born and bred in an Hellenic setting in which politics played (as they still do) an important part. There is much irony in the fact that, in order to enhance the significance and scope of his School, he was obliged to give it the form of a political movement. Only after calamity had overtaken it, and the surviving Pythagorean Caenobitae continued to be tracked down and harassed by their enemies, did Greece take an interest in his teachings. Such were the handicaps and difficulties under which Pythagoras laboured, and when we realise this, we can only marvel the more at the achievements of this greatly travelled and gifted ancient master.

The Oriental influences under which he came, as a result of his voyage in the East, are mirrored in his work. Although I know that many, more qualified than I, deny this, it seems to me, all the same, that much which is fundamental in what the Pythagoreans believed must have been gleaned by their leader in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia, and from Jews, Zoroastrian Magi and Brahmins with whom he came into contact.

Less imbued, perhaps, with Hellenic sobriety of thought than his Greek contemporaries and successors, Pythagoras, in my view, set up an intellectual edifice which can be compared to a classical Ionian temple with Hindu decorative motives. This is no doubt why Aristotle never refers to the followers of the ancient master otherwise than by contemptuously calling them the "so-called Pythagoreans" and why Pythagoras' learning earned for itself the derogative epithet of *polymathia* (encyclopaedic knowledge) from Heracleitus.

If I mention this—at the risk of being out of tune in this Foreword, for which I beg to be forgiven if I am—it is because as a result of prolonged and active sojourns in Persia and India over a period of twenty-three years as an anthropological explorer, there is much in the Pythagorean doctrine which reminds me of the basic outlook of the civilizations in those parts of the world. Thus, the belief in the transmigration of souls (metempsychosis) is Vishnuvite in nature and to be found in Vedic India long before even the foundation of Buddhism by Gautama in the 7th century B.C., love of animals and respect for life in any form, coupled with vegetarian eating habits are accompanying traits of the faith in re-incarnation; the mystic value of numbers is a recurring theme of both Indian and Iranian cosmology, the last dramatic appearance of which is perhaps the revolutionary movement of Sayyid Mirza Ali Muhammad (el Bab) of Shiraz in Persia in the middle of the last century; self-imolation through fasting is not unknown in India even to-day, where the life of the virtuous Brahmin is still regulated by the Vedic precepts of the four stages which he must go through from birth to death.



In many ways, the Pythagorean School is indicative, and through this symbolic, of the early connections of Greek thought with that of the East, a relationship which was to enjoy a revival with Neo-Platonism after the Alexandrian conquest of the Orient. It serves admirably to show how out of Oriental metaphysical concepts, interpreting with fantasy observations often of real pragmatic value, developed the Hellenic dispassionate recording of experimentally controllable facts, which was to lay the lasting foundation of present-day science and of Western material progress.

If Pythagoras made astronomy out of Babylonian star-gazing and astrology, philosophy out of Syrian, Jewish and Egyptian cosmogony, elaborated geometry out of Nilotic temple-building and agronomy, and introduced the mathematical abstraction of proportion into earlier more primitive Oriental methods of calculation, it is because he was a Greek. With him, the Mediterranean discipline of measured thought imposed itself upon the unbridled flowerings of Eastern speculation, and led the minds of men, of Occidental men at least, into new channels with the rich and rewarding results which we know to-day.

With Pythagoras and later Euclid, geometry took on its final Hellenic form. Modern Greeks are conscious of this fact, and it is perhaps not entirely by chance that the opening verses of our National Anthem, after stating that an Hellene under foreign rule is easily recognizable by the cut of his terrible sword, goes on to say that he is so also "by the looks with which he hastily measures the earth." For what is geo-metry if it is not "measuring the earth"?

Mr. Leslie Ralph has written a lively account of Pythagoras' life and philosophy which everybody will take pleasure and interest in reading. Personal anecdotes abound, and they give just that intimate touch which shows that the author knows his subject well and has wanted to bring Pythagoras, the man, to his readers. He succeeds remarkably well in doing this, and communicates to others some of his own admiration and attachment for the figure of the ancient Greek philosopher. He renders thereby a useful service, by making him better known to a much larger public than usual.

*Copenhagen, October 1960.*

## INTRODUCTION

Pythagoras is a semi-legendary figure of whom we have little first hand knowledge. His genius is attested by the fact that he was universally acclaimed by the ancients many centuries after his death and Pythagoreans are to be found in our own times, some 25 centuries later. Such a reputation makes it almost certain that he must have been a very celebrated person indeed. In common with other famous men his character has been marred by authors both ancient and modern, attributing to him many things which are at variance with his life as a philosopher and social reformer. Some of these writers fasten to his name instances of a miraculous nature which not only transgress the bounds of probability but in some cases they go far beyond the realm of common sense.

To disentangle the accumulated mass of disconnected detail written over a period of a thousand years is a stupendous task which demands an infinite patience and a very considerable knowledge of the subject.

During the past 25 years I have studied this problem closely and I must confess that on more than one occasion I have given up the effort in face of the many contradictory statements which are to be found in the Pythagorean memoirs. After a time the old fascination reasserted itself over me and yet again I applied myself to the labour of unravelling the tangled skein of beauty and wisdom hidden away under the literary debris washed up by the passage of time. It is extremely difficult to present a concise and coherent account of the life and teachings of this philosopher without being drawn into the maelstrom of academic speculation and interminable polemic.

Pythagoras was a man of many interests and varied activities. He is to be found as a lawgiver, social reformer, philosopher, scientist and the prophet of a new religion. Such a character is not easily portrayed. Most of the information at one's disposal is largely apocryphal and he is to be sharply disassociated from the

many subsequent Pythagoreans who piously attributed their own speculations to him in order that their opinions may carry the weight of conviction. Iamblichus, for example, wrote a *Life of Pythagoras* some 800 years after the philosopher's death. His writings clearly show that imagination conquered any tendencies he may have had for veracity yet something in his work must surely rest upon knowledge gleaned from earlier texts. In view of this observation his book cannot be completely disregarded. The same consideration must be extended to Porphyrius, his teacher and companion, who also compiled a biography of Pythagoras.

When we come to examine the principles of the Pythagorean philosophy still greater difficulties are encountered. As early as the 5th century B.C. the school had divided itself into two main streams of thought and custom, each considerably different to the other. One became almost purely mathematical in its range of activity whereas the other became absorbed in a peculiar mysticism and a sectarian way of life. Both schools, however, were caught up in the popular movement of Orphic revivalism, the mystery religion which exerted such a powerful spiritual ascendancy over the people of Magna Graecia at that time.

Pythagoras himself was an Ionian by birth and family and it is quite reasonable to believe that he inherited something of the traditional Ionic materialism expounded by his instructors Thales, Anaximander and his friend and fellow philosopher Anaximenes. During the 6th century B.C. a wave of scientific speculation swept over Ionia. Men sought to replace the old doctrine of spontaneous generation by gods with a rational explanation for the origins of life. It is certain that Pythagoras included such sentiments within the framework of his philosophy and this can be seen by the extant fragments of texts of such early Pythagoreans as Philolaus and Archytas in which these ideas appear.

The Pythagorean cosmology consists of two active and two passive principles which are a natural development of the opinions of Anaximander who postulated that the original substance is of an indeterminable nature. According to Anaximander the universe evolves out of an indeterminate potentia possessing within itself a dynamic principle which creates and destroys nature in the

course of time. Pythagoras believed that the "pure unbounded Aether" is a kind of mental substance in which the principle of "Harmony" or the Contemplator moves and has its being. Through the action of will-power this Contemplator creates atoms or bubbles of energy in the Aether and by a process of mathematical thought arranges these atoms into forms which it animates with a detached part of its own active principle. From one viewpoint this is a kind of materialism not out of keeping with the doctrines of his teacher Anaximander but viewed from a higher level we have here a pure transcendentalism, stressing as it does that the whole creation is a series of arithmological thought existing within the mind of God.

Pythagoras possessed yet another side to his character. Running through his teachings is a vein of high morality and deep religious feeling, no doubt intensified by the prevailing Orphic influences of the time. His particular genius was the ability to blend these disparate elements into a rational philosophy which he extended into a way of life. In his religious expression Pythagoras retained the name of Zeus, the supreme deity of the ancient Greeks. Zeus was originally a sky-god but eventually came to be regarded by the Greeks as the "Father of Gods and men." The more coarser aspects of the Zeus cult were replaced by Pythagoras with concepts built upon a grander scale. From a tribal God Zeus emerges under Pythagorean treatment as a cosmological Power. According to Aristotle the Pythagoreans believed that the centre of the universe is occupied by a divine Fire which they called the Watchtower of Zeus. The name of Zeus is well chosen because its derivation means "Life." The Pythagoreans also paid great attention to the Apolline worship, in fact Pythagoras himself is named after the Pythian Apollo. This is natural and consistent with Pythagorean sentiment as Apollo was not only the President of the Muses but also the "God of the Golden Mean," the spirit of the middle path upon which all Pythagoreans strove to walk. Apollo also exhorted his devotees to "know thyself," a command imposed by Pythagoras upon his followers.

In making my selection from the Pythagorean memoirs I have been guided by two considerations. They are to present a coherent story of his life and to offer a resumé of his philosophy containing the essential tenets as they were originally taught by

Pythagoras himself. In the details of his life I have drawn freely from all available sources, even allowing a certain measure of mysticism found in the original texts to be retained. I have based the ethical teachings of Pythagoras upon the well known Golden Verses. In the text I have introduced these Verses as spoken by the philosopher in order to obtain some smoothness of continuity. The principles of his philosophy I have prepared after a very careful consideration of early texts upon this subject.

In connection with this matter it must be clearly borne in mind that many words familiar to us today as meaning one thing frequently had many other and often different meanings for the Greeks of the 6th century B.C. Particular attention is drawn to two words. They are the words Harmony and Tetractys. In ancient Greek the term Harmony means Fate. It comes from the root Harmozo which means "to set into order, arrange and to govern." In Diogenes Laertius (viii, 33) we find this passage: "Virtue, health and all goodness, even God Himself is Harmony. This is the reason why they (i.e. the Pythagoreans) say that all things are constructed according to the Law of Harmony."

The numeral Tetractys is the ancient Greek for the number four. This word is peculiarly Pythagorean, as expressed symbolically it is the badge of the Brotherhood. In the Golden Verses we find the Pythagorean Oath: "By Him who revealed to us the Tetractys, Fountain of Eternal Nature . . ." This is doubtless a reference to the "Four Eternal Truths which are facets of the one Reality." Although the ancient texts do not actually say this a careful consideration of the early writings definitely indicate this was implied. Under no circumstances would an ancient Pythagorean reveal that which was imparted to him under an oath of secrecy. One must not overlook the fact that the serious charge of impiety could be levelled against any person deviating from the paths of established religion. The scientific aspect of the Pythagorean teachings could bring them into collision with orthodoxy as in fact their social and political activities brought about their dispersion from Croton after the Sybarite War of 510 B.C.

In conclusion let me say this. Pythagoras was a truly great man whose philosophy has influenced mankind through the cen-



turies. His attempt to reconcile science with religion, his advice to follow a middle path between extremes of thought and action, his intense humanity are examples of which the world stands in urgent need today. Time has not outdated the principles he represented and this is perhaps the finest compliment one can pay to the memory of any great leader.

LESLIE RALPH.

*WIMBLEDON, EASTER, 1960.*

## PYTHAGORAS

### I

Legend records that Ancaeus who once lived at Samos in the land of Cephallenia was commanded by the ancient Oracle at Delphi to journey abroad and establish a Grecian settlement on one of the islands in the Aegean Sea. Now this Ancaeus was directed to gather together many people from Athens, Epidauris and Chalcis and lead them to the island of Metemphyllos, so called because the colour of the soil there was dark and fruitful.

When the company had reached this island Ancaeus looked about him and discovering a suitable site he built a city which he named Samos after the city of that name which stood upon the mainland of his native home. With the passing of time this new city grew rich and powerful and much trade was carried on there. Among the wealthy merchants there was a certain engraver of Signets and precious gems whose name was Mnesarchus, a descendant of the founder of the city.

Now this Mnesarchus took for his second wife a beautiful woman called Parthenis who also was a descendant of the famed Ancaeus by another line. Both he and his wife were held in high esteem by the Samians on account of their industry and nobility of descent. By his first wife who had died, for Mnesarchus was in his middle years, he had two sons called Eunomus and Tyrrhenus. According to ancient tradition it is said that the advent of Pythagoras was foretold by the Oracle at Delphi. It came about in this way.

Mnesarchus in his travels on business came one day to the Temple of Apollo accompanied by his wife. As was the custom of the times, he enquired of the Oracle whether his proposed journey into Syria would be propitious and in accordance with his wishes. The Priestess of the Temple replied saying that his journey would prove fortunate and prosperous but announced to him as a matter of greater moment, that his wife was now with child.



The Oracle prophesied that she would bring forth a son who was destined to serve all humanity, a son in whom the spirit of Apollo, son of Zeus, would dwell.

The Oracle declared that Pythagoras would be his name and that he would be a man of great distinction and consummate wisdom. Overjoyed with this good news Mnesarchus changed his wife's name to Pythais in honour to the Pythian Apollo and when it came to pass that she gave birth to a son he called him Pythagoras in memory of that day when the Oracle had predicted his birth. Thus Pythagoras, the third son of Mnesarchus and the first-born of Pythais, was born during the forty-sixth Olympiad (591 B.C.).

When Mnesarchus returned to Samos from the land of Syria laden with great riches he caused a temple to be raised to the glory of Apollo whose Oracle had counselled him so wisely. As the years passed by and Pythagoras grew into boyhood his father, who loved him deeply, caused him to be received by the most eminent men of the time. By reason of his great wealth Mnesarchus was able to do this. In his early youth Pythagoras studied under Creophilus the Younger and he applied himself to the study of languages with great earnestness. His character was formed at a very early age and he was greatly admired by all who had the good fortune to know him for he was never moved to anger or addicted to any form of coarseness. Ever calm, kindly and gentle many people came to wonder whether he was human for, they said, he did not exhibit any human weakness.

When Pythagoras was eighteen years of age, at the time when Polycrates first rose to power in Samos, his father died. Being now a young man of an independent nature and having a dislike for the despotism of the ruler he decided to leave Samos. With his friend Hermodamus he quietly departed one night. His uncle Zoilus gave him a gift of three silver vases with a letter of introduction to Pherecydes the philosopher, who at that time resided on the near-by island of Lesbos. Their subsequent meeting proved to be the beginning of a lifelong friendship between them.

A little later on he met Anaximander and his pupil Anaximenes at Miletus. These two men were among the most original thinkers at that time and they discussed together the great problems

concerning the origins of the universe. He also called upon Thales who dwelt in the city. Thales was quick to notice the vast difference between Pythagoras and the other young men of his age. Apologising for his senility, for Thales was now an elderly man, he advised Pythagoras to travel widely in order to gain experience and knowledge of people in other lands.

Acting upon this wise advice Pythagoras sailed to the great commercial city of Sidon in Phoenicia. Upon his arrival there he sought out Mochus the celebrated physiologist and studied under his guidance. He was admitted into the colleges of Byblos and Tyre where his application to learning was observed by the priests with great favour. He himself once said that he did not study for the sake of idle curiosity or for superstition but with a genuine regard to examine all things with an open and unprejudiced mind.

When he had completed his studies in Phoenicia he bade the priests farewell and retired to a deserted temple which stood upon the summit of Mount Carmelus. In solitude he devoted many months studying the stars and contemplating upon the nature of the universe. One day it came about that an Egyptian ship anchored under the mountain side to shelter from a fierce storm and Pythagoras conceiving the idea of travelling to Egypt decided to journey there upon this ship. He came down to the shore and hailing the ship, he asked one of the sailors in Egyptian whether he might travel with them. The captain of the ship granted his request and Pythagoras went aboard and seated himself down in a place least likely to incommode the sailors in their work.

He remained without moving from his place for three days and two nights enrapt in deep thought. At first the sailors entertained the notion of selling him into slavery but during the voyage they came to alter their plans for such an impression did he make among them that they came to the opinion that he had brought them good fortune. The weather became unusually calm for that time of year and he radiated such an air of peace that even the wild sea birds fed from his extended hand like tame creatures.

Upon their arrival in Egypt the crew of the ship helped Pythagoras ashore and raised before him an altar on which they placed flowers and fruits gathered from trees growing nearby.

When they had done this the crew quietly departed upon their journey. During his sojourn in Egypt he visited their seats of learning in the great cities of Memphis and Thebes. He also visited the King of that land who received him in friendship for this king, unlike his predecessors, had a liking for the Greeks.

At first the priests of Diospolis ignored him altogether. They allowed him to spend his time in the temple courtyard but beyond that he was not permitted to go. In order to discourage him and cast down his spirit they imposed harsh trials of endurance upon him but he met all of these obstacles with such fortitude that at last even these priests were so impressed by his constancy that they initiated him into the mysteries of their learning, a favour not frequently accorded to any but native born Egyptians.

In all Pythagoras spent some twenty years in Egypt. Later on he left that country to visit Babylon, the largest and most famous city of the ancient world. Here he quickly became known to the Chaldean Magi, the most celebrated astronomers of the time. Under their tuition he studied music and mathematics and discovered their methods of astronomical calculation.

## II

Pythagoras was over forty years of age when he returned to Samos. Upon his arrival home apart from his mother few of the inhabitants save the elderly recognised him. It was not long however before he attracted their attention. The natural charm of his manner and the wide range of his learning soon distinguished him from the general public. The people of Samos called upon him to assist them in their public affairs. He accepted their invitation but when he discovered that his assistance was not heeded he withdrew. The Samians stood in considerable awe of Polycrates whose unexampled good fortune caused them to submit to his tyranny. This despot invited Pythagoras to live at his court in high station but the philosopher declined the honour. He retired to live in a cave outside of the city where he dwelt in solitude. It was while he was staying here that he completed his cosmological system which he demonstrated through a special form of arithmological geometry which he called "Historia" or research.

One day while he was sitting in the Gymnasium Pythagoras happened to observe a boy playing at ball. Knowing the youth to be in poor circumstances he conceived an idea whereby he might be able to help him. Calling the boy to him he pretended that due to advancing age he was failing in his memory and wanted someone to record his experiences. He was anxious, he said, to retain certain studies he had acquired whilst resident in foreign lands. If the boy would be willing to receive gradually and easily certain lessons Pythagoras said that he would supply him with the necessities of life.

The boy, quick to notice that he stood to gain which ever way the arrangement fell out readily agreed to do as Pythagoras had suggested. Having come to terms over the matter Pythagoras then began to educate the youth and he gave him three oboli for each lesson he completed. After a few months had passed and observing the boy to conform to a gentle manner Pythagoras pretended to poverty and told him that he was no longer in the position to pay him and would therefore in consequence have to cease giving him instruction.

The boy was dismayed and cast down when he heard this news for he greatly enjoyed his lessons. Rather than discontinue them he offered to go to work and pay Pythagoras, saying "I will in future look after you, sir. I will in my turn pay you three oboli for each lesson you give me." When Pythagoras heard this he was overjoyed with the boy for it proved and confirmed his belief that education often develops the better side of a boy's character. Later when Pythagoras emigrated to southern Italy this boy, who shared the same name, accompanied him there.

During this period of his life Pythagoras visited many of the Aegean islands. On one occasion when he was at Delos the sacred island of Apollo, he went into the Temple and approached the bloodless altar upon which only flowers and fruits may be offered. Dressed in a white robe he stood before the altar and offered reverence to the Gods in deep silence. On seeing him do this a bystander came up to him and asked why did he not offer a prayer? He replied, "I have already done so for the Gods read my mind. Words are not necessary." He went on to say "When

we pray we should intercede for the welfare of our fellow creatures and not ask favours for ourselves."

When he conformed to ancient custom and sacrificed to the Gods he would offer up oxen made of honey, frankincense and barleymeal for he did not approve of animal sacrifice in any form. So keen was he to examine all things without prejudice he would willingly test any claim put forward no matter how absurd it may at first appear. He once made a special journey to the island of Crete to visit the famous cave on Mount Ida where, legend said, Zeus Himself was born. He stayed there for twenty seven days and upon the cradle exhibited inside the cave, he wrote the words: "Pythagoras to Zeus. Here once was Zan whom people call Zeus."

Going down to the sea shore he kept a vigil all through the night seated upon the fleece of a black ram according to the custom of those who dedicate themselves to the service of the Gods. A few days later he set sail from the island of Crete for Sparta to study the laws of that country, which were formulated after the Doric fashion. He stayed with the Spartans for several months before returning to Samos.

Some time after he had arrived home he established a school within the city which in later days, became known as the Semi-circle of Pythagoras. His ideas for a social reformation were so far in advance of the prevailing customs that the people of Samos feared to adopt them, partly because they did not understand his advanced views and largely because they feared to give offence to the absolute authority of their ruler.

### III

Realising that little could be done in Samos for the people of that island were not willing to help themselves he decided to migrate to the Grecian colonies in southern Italy where old customs had not yet firmly asserted themselves upon the people. Pythagoras selected the city of Croton, a place already famous for its medical colleges and for the great number of successful candidates it put up for the Olympic Games.



A few years previously the people of Croton had suffered a grievous military defeat at the hands of the combined Locrian and Rhegian forces. The contending armies had met on the banks of the river Sagra and after the most fierce opposition the Crotoniates were routed by an enemy vastly inferior in numbers to themselves. Because of this the people of Croton were in a most despondent mood and ready for a complete reorganisation of their state.

The decision of Pythagoras to settle at Croton proved wise for soon after his arrival there such was the change in his fortunes that he attracted over six hundred followers to his cause. His great gifts and personal charm were such that crowds came running to hear him whenever he gave a public address. On one certain occasion over two thousand people were converted to his teaching at a single meeting. Indeed so great was his fame that even his followers were popularly described by the people as "Prophets to declare the Will of God."

Under his guidance and acting upon his advice his followers put all of their worldly possessions into a common fund and shared a communal life. If ever one of them decided to leave the brotherhood he received from his fellow brothers twice the amount he had originally deposited with them and a tomb-stone was raised in his memory. Should they happen to meet him after this they behaved toward him as if they had met together for the first time.

They congregated together in a place outside of the city which was known as the Homacoion or "Place of the Brothers." This place was situated near to the sea shore and possessed a little temple set in a beautiful garden where the brothers would walk in peace and solitude. They became known as the Caenobitae because they shared all things together in complete amity.

Pythagoras was a great advocate of freedom from lordliness and oppression. Where ever he met with these things he spoke out fearlessly against them. He inspired people with such a love for freedom and equal opportunity that very soon cities like Croton, Sybaris, Catanes, Rhegium and Metapontum, to mention but a few, gradually began to revise their systems of administration.

Although he was now a man of public affairs Pythagoras remained unaffected by the adulation he received at the hands of

the people. One day as he was walking along the shore on his way home from a visit to the city of Sybaris he came upon some fishermen who were drawing in their nets laden with fish. Pausing beside them he said he could tell them the exact number of fish they had caught by the pull of the net.

Upon hearing this the fishermen laughed and put him to scorn conceiving that they had to do with a vain fellow but after some lively discussion on the matter they eventually came to agree to do whatever he desired providing that his estimate of the number of fish in the net proved to be correct. When they had at length counted them they discovered to their complete astonishment that they had caught the exact number which he had predicted. When the count had been verified he directed them to return the fish into the sea. Pythagoras then gave them the price of their catch and continued on his journey to Croton.

The fishermen, having discovered his name from some children playing on the sea shore told everyone they knew about this unusual incident. When they heard the strange story which seemed to have no clear purpose, many people became curious and desired to meet him.

An invitation was sent to him to visit their city which he did a little time later. Going into their public meeting place he was immediately surrounded by a large concourse of very curious people. When they had settled down all around him he thanked them warmly for their attention and began to speak to them saying:

"My dear friends we are as little ships sailing upon the great ocean of life. We come into this world alone and at last we go out of it alone. We are lonely creatures seeking a safe haven. If we regulate our lives we shall not have to endure the greatest measure of ill fortune. Firstly I say to you this, honour the immortal Gods for they are established by the Law of the universe. Observe well the Oath whose power is Fate, that necessity which governs everything. Offer respect and consideration to the worthy people on this earth.

"Love your parents and behave always in such a manner that potential enemies are converted into good friends. Always give attention to your friend's advice and take an example from his bene-



volent deeds. Avoid always to magnify a trivial blemish in a friend's character. I will reveal to you a great truth, Necessity is the Power that comes to a man's aid at his extreme need. You should always be on your guard against impulses and desires which spring up from anger, pride and selfishness. Have such respect for the great Spirit of Life that dwells within you so that you would be too ashamed to commit a dishonourable deed."

Continuing his address he urged them to study the hidden working of Nature and to apply a calm and just reason in all things for, he said, "Knowledge and right behaviour alone divides a man from the lower animals." He advised them to be temperate in habit and to train the physical body to overcome hardships. "Remember, a friend is another self," he declared in advising them to develop the great gift of making friends with all conditions of people. Whenever he found a man striving to do good he would at once take to him and make him a personal friend.

Among the people who listened to him were many young people of wealthy families and when they returned to their homes they recounted to their parents what he had said. At length his public lectures reached the notice of the Senate of Croton and the City Council, known as the Council of One Thousand, invited him into their private Chambers to thank him for what he had done for the public good.

They further intimated to him that if he had anything that he would like to say to them they would be very pleased to hear it. With a considerable courage he spoke firmly to them upon the nature of justice and wise government. In conclusion to his address he said, "Above all things respect yourselves and practice justice in your words and in your deeds. Be reasonable in all things. Remember you govern your city by the consent of the people as a common deposit and you should exceed your fellow countrymen in the dispensation of justice alone.

"Wealth and glory are transient for as they are acquired in the same way they can be lost. Whenever ill fortune comes your way support your share with patience and fortitude. Do not grieve over it but try to overcome it if it is at all possible. Bear in mind that Fate cannot send the greatest measure of ill fortune to a wise man.

"You must already know that among a crowd there are many conflicting opinions. Some of these opinions are wise and some of them are foolish. Do not accept them eagerly nor impatiently reject them because you do not agree. If a man speaks falsely be calm and patient with him.

"Observe all things well and let no man either by word or deed tempt you into saying or doing anything which is not honourable. Think well before you act. The man who speaks or acts without forethought is not the happiest of men. Avoid doing those things which will afflict you later on and cause you to repent. If you do not fully understand what you are about do not do it until you have made every effort to obtain knowledge of the matter. In this way you will not waste your life to a useless purpose."

When he had finished, his advice was greeted with enthusiasm and the Senate, so full of admiration for him, they invited him to teach their children the art of good citizenship. They placed at his disposal the Temple of Apollo so that he could instruct the boys and the Temple of Hera for the girls.

#### IV

Some days later Pythagoras entered the Temple of Apollo one morning to teach the boys gathered together there to receive his instruction. Gathering them around him as a father might do with his own children he began by saying, "Whomsoever knows more than me is my father. He who knows as much as me is my brother and he who knows less than me is my son. Therefore it becomes a youth to pay attention to study and cultivate the virtue of listening well in order that he may learn to speak well and to the point.

"Idle chatter is like a stone cast in vain for no one knows where it may land or what damage it might do. Choose well your path in life and follow it through to your life's end. Slander no one neither harbour thoughts of revenge against any one who may slander you. Always account it a point of honour to treat people younger than yourselves with kindness and consideration and help

those who stand in need of your assistance. Regard the aged with kindness for remember this well, time alone separates you from them."

In the afternoon he visited the Temple of Hera to teach the girls. To them he gave this advice : " Do not neglect your health. Eat and drink in moderation and pay due attention to physical exercise. By moderation I mean that which will not distress you. Accustom yourself to a way of living that is neat and decent without vain show and avoid those things which cause others to be envious of you. Do not be extravagant in your habits neither be mean or selfish. Always follow the middle path and avoid going to an extreme in anything."

It is said that Pythagoras produced such a change in the lives of the people of Croton that the men were proud to be numbered among his followers and the women would never venture forth arrayed in costly clothes or jewellery.

About this time Pythagoras married Theano the daughter of Brontinus, a native of Croton. His wife helped him in his work and eventually became the leader of the women who joined the new Order, for she was a noble minded woman of high virtues. That women were admitted into the Order may be regarded as unusual but Pythagoras believed that each of the sexes had a special mission in life and were to be considered as equal and opposite.

Pythagoras was the first person to describe himself as a philosopher. It came about when he attended the Olympic Games and the multitude greeted him with the title of " Wise man." Leon, Prince of Phlius, who was present asked Pythagoras the nature of his art to which he replied, " I am a philosopher." As the word was original at that time, the Prince asked him, " What is a philosopher ?"

Pythagoras paused for a moment to reflect and then answered him saying, " Life Prince Leon, may be well compared with these public Games for in the vast crowd assembled here some are attracted by the acquisition of gain, others are led on by the hopes and ambitions of fame and glory. But among them there are a few who have come to observe and to understand all that passes here.

"It is the same with life. Some are influenced by the love of wealth while others are blindly led on by the mad fever for power and domination, but the finest type of man gives himself up to discovering the meaning and purpose of life itself. He seeks to uncover the secrets of nature. This is the man I call a philosopher for although no man is completely wise in all respects, he can love wisdom as the key to nature's secrets."

The Brotherhood which Pythagoras founded spread to many cities and although the members were sometimes strangers to one another they had a saying whereby they recognised their common fellowship. They used the phrase "All things accord in Number and Harmony binds them together." As this expression touched on the cornerstone of the Pythagorean beliefs this sentence was particularly well chosen.

When the Pythagoreans were obliged to take an Oath they would say: "By Him who revealed the Tetractys, Fountain of Eternal Nature, I speak the truth." By "Him" they referred to Pythagoras. The Tetractys, or Four was depicted symbolically by ten points arranged in the form of a triangle. This symbol became the Sign of the Order as it possessed a special significance for them. The Monad stood for Harmony and the Dyad represented the boundless Aether. The Triad was a symbol for the atoms and the Tetrad referred to the nature of Number. Taken together they became the Decad, a name they gave to the universe and everything within it.

A Pythagorean who used the Oath was taking it in the name of the Order, which in a strange way was regarded as the incarnation of the Four Eternal Truths, because they believed that all creatures were the physical and spiritual embodiment of these Truths. A Pythagorean however would rarely swear an Oath as it was the custom among them to make their own unsupported word acceptable among men of honour.

## V

Apart from his public work Pythagoras accepted men and women whom he chose with great care to receive his private instruction. He separated his followers into different classes according

to their interests and natural ability. He gave to each of them as much knowledge as they could understand. He divided his people into two divisions which came to be known as the Mathematici and the Acoustmatici. The former made a careful study of the teaching and shared all of their possessions in common but the Acoustmatici only attended his evening lectures and observed the precepts of his moral instruction. They retained their own possessions. In later times these people were popularly called Pythagoreans and Pythagorists. The teaching of Pythagoras came to be known as the Mathema, an ancient Greek word meaning "that which is studied."

Those chosen to receive his more advanced instruction usually met together in the garden of Pythagoras during the summer evenings. On these rare occasions the meeting took on the nature of a religious observance for they considered the revelation of knowledge to be a most solemn occasion. They would wait in silence for him to speak and unveil the basic principles of his philosophy.

"The universe endures for all eternity for neither within it can there be found any cause more powerful than itself nor outside it any cause able to destroy it. There are Four Eternal Truths which are facets of one Reality. Each is contained within the other and together they are One. This is the mystery of the Tetractys. Harmony is the Power which arranges and moves into order the establishment of the universe, it is the Contemplator dwelling in the nature of all being. The pure boundless Aether is the primal substance of the cosmic mind in which the spirit of the Contemplator exists.

"Through the action of its Will the Contemplator creates a vortex in the boundless Aether which cause the atoms to appear, like bubbles rising up in flowing water. The atoms are suspended in the Aether like motes floating in a shaft of sunlight. The Contemplator thinks in Number because Number is the infinite principle of the forms which the atoms assume when they are gathered together and set into order, for the concept of Number is an assemblage of units.

"The universe is a living mind and all of the things that exist within it are made of atoms, assembled to the pattern produced by pure thought in Number, conceived by the Will of



the Contemplator. The living creature is a union of the Power of the thought and the assembled atoms which that Power holds together. He is a concept in the cosmic mind that is given form and being. The Power which sustains the thought-form is the essence of his spirit and this spirit essence is individualised within the form it animates. To conquer the limitation imposed by its own natural unity the Contemplator unfolds its thoughts so that each and every one may evolve into sentient being in the fulness of time and destiny.

"The creature evolves from a lower into a higher form of life according to his actions toward his own environment. Knowledge of the self and of Nature is the food on which his mind develops. All things are controlled by Law and this Law is the Will of Harmony, that necessity which moves all nature. When time or disease destroys the body you may wonder if a greater calamity can assail a creature but I tell you that we are really free from death. Nothing ever dies but changing takes a new form. In all the world nothing stands still. Things ebb and flow and everything alters its shape in the fulness of time for life is a changeless spirit in an ever changing body.

"The cycle of life has six periods which are birth, growth, decay, death, absorption and metamorphosis. When we die our bodies are absorbed back into nature and our spirit returns to the spirit of the Contemplator but like a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis, changed in form, likewise do we experience another change. Nature strikes a balance in all things. In life the passage between birth and death is equal to that between death and birth. It is the Law that all that are born must die even as that which dies must again be born. This is our pilgrimage from the primeval mud of our beginning to our ultimate dwelling beyond the stars.

"The Gods are those beings who have travelled the Path of Life before us. They stand in relation to us as we stand in relation to those animals less developed than ourselves. It is all a question of degree but have no fear for I tell you truly that we are part of the Cosmic Spirit and that spirit is eternal. Do not dishonour the God that dwells within you and always remember the Mystery of the Tetractys, for he who knows this shall know the Contemplator and this knowledge is possessed by the Gods

alone. As a flower slowly grows to its perfection out of a tiny seed so does a God gradually evolve out of a man."

When he had concluded his revelation Pythagoras returned to his house, leaving his chosen followers to ponder upon his words and endeavour to understand the great secret which he had revealed to them.

## VI

It is said that Pythagoras possessed the gift of memory extending through life and death, hence in life he could re-call to mind everything and when he died he still retained his memory. His more mystical followers believed that in all of his incarnations he always presented the same appearance. An old tradition has it that once he had been Aethalides, the son of Hermes. Later he was re-born as Euphorbus, a Trojan warrior. Now this Euphorbus declared that he had once been Aethalides in a previous life. When Euphorbus was slain by Patroclus in the Trojan War he was born as Hermotimus the prophet, who possessed the unique ability of leaving his physical body in sleep yet retaining his consciousness.

With the passing of time he was born again as a fisherman of Delos and was called Pyrrhus, who again declared that he could remember his previous experiences. Now when Pyrrhus died he was born again as Pythagoras. In order to support his claim Pythagoras went into the Temple of Apollo at Branchidae and accurately identified and deciphered an inscription on a shield once used by Euphorbus, although the shield was now so old that little beyond the ivory facing had survived the ravages of time.

In looking over the life of Pythagoras it is almost certain that he did possess unusual powers. Many people who knew him readily believed him to have attained to a very high state of human development. Indeed the more credulous among them declared that as it is not possible for human minds to understand a higher nature of being, Apollo took human shape in order that he may disclose to mankind the profound secrets of Nature.



Many solemnly testified that Pythagoras appeared to his followers in Metapontum in Italy and Tauromanium in Sicily at the same time. Once while tasting water drawn from a well he accurately foretold the coming of an earthquake and on another occasion he told a man who ran up to him the contents of his message. On a certain day when Pythagoras stood watching a ship sail into harbour he said to a bystander "You are wondering, my friend, what that ship is carrying. It is bringing home a body for burial." Later this was proved to be correct.

Pythagoras certainly had the power of dominion over wild animals. Once during his travels he came to a village in Daunia which was being terrorised by a savage bear. Boldly approaching the beast he stroked and pacified it by feeding it upon acorns and maize. The animal became tame and was never known to attack anyone again. He quietened a wild ox in a similar manner. This animal became so docile that it was left in the courtyard of the Temple of Apollo and was often fed by passers by. It was popularly known as the "Ox of Pythagoras."

Once when he was conversing with some of his followers on the slopes of Mount Olympus he saw a white eagle flying overhead. As the subject of his conversation was on the nature of augury, he used certain sounds which induced the bird to fly down to him. After gently stroking it for a while he let it go free. His great fondness for animals led him to closely study their ways and habits so that he might come to understand them well.

In order to make men think for themselves he would sometimes speak to them in riddles. These precepts and watchwords were collected by the later Pythagorists and became known as the Apothegms of Pythagoras. All of these sayings contained a gem of profound wisdom which he left to the enquirer to discover for himself. These are some of his sayings: "Do not step over the beam of a balance." "Do not put the image of a God in the circle of a ring." "Do not wipe up a mess with a torch." "Do not keep birds with hooked claws." "Do not sit down upon a bushel." "Do not eat the heart." "Do not leave the pan's imprint upon the ashes." "Do not offer insult to the sun." "Do not keep swallows under your roof." "Do not turn round at the border when you travel abroad." "Always turn the sharp blade away." "Cut not fire with a sword."

These precepts possessed special meanings which unveiled themselves to the earnest seeker. They became proverbs among his followers and gradually became general throughout Greater Greece.

## VII

Men from all parts of the world came to Croton to hear his lectures. They would congregate in his garden in the cool of the evening and Pythagoras seated in the little temple would speak to them. To these Pythagorists he would often repeat certain sayings of his. Among them he frequently said, "Ask yourselves every evening before you retire to rest, these questions: Wherein have I failed? What have I achieved? Wherein have I been wrong? What duties did I leave?"

"If the answers to these questions are unsatisfactory try to remedy the failing. If you have done anyone a good act rejoice in the happiness you have given to him. Make this habit a regular practice for in this way your spirit will grow — and will eventually bring you to the path which leads away from the petty weaknesses of human frailty.

"Never set yourselves to work until you have silently dedicated yourselves to finish that which you intend to begin. In this way you will come to understand more about the nature of the Gods and men, how far the different species of life extend and what it is that contains and binds them together. You will learn that the Law of Nature has established the inner nature of all things alike.

"Do not be disappointed for in time nothing shall be hidden from you. Do not vainly hope for those things which cannot be. You will learn also this fact, men often bring upon themselves their own misfortunes. Blinded by their own shortcomings they can neither see nor understand the means of escape that is so near to them. Very few indeed are they who know how to deliver themselves out of their self-imposed bondage.

"Such it seems is the Fate which blinds mankind and makes havoc of their senses. Bound to their own impulses they are

oppressed by countless evils for bitter inborn strife is their constant companion, raising them high on one occasion and casting them low on the next. Yet they do not appear to perceive it. Instead of provoking and stirring it up they could on quiet reflection discover a way to avoid it.

"O Zeus, Father of Life! Were it but possible for you to deliver them from their evils. If only you would show to them the Power of which they make use without destroying their right of choice! But we must have courage for men are Gods in the making and the day will come when Nature shall give up her most guarded secrets. When you understand you will easily achieve that which it is your destiny to do.

"Healing yourselves you will be delivered from all the afflictions which assail the mind and the body. You should be careful to avoid those habits which cloud the mind and lead you to doubt and confusion. Make a just distinction of all the problems which arise in life and examine all things well. As a safeguard leave yourselves to be always guided by the voice of your Spirit which will easily be heard if you will only have the patience to listen. The Spirit should always hold the reins of your mind.

"This I can certainly promise you. A time will surely come when you will conquer the shortcomings of your human nature and you will raise yourself to a higher level of life. You will, in fact, become a God, immortal and incorruptible and death shall no longer have any power over you."

When he had spoken he would then join his followers for their evening meal and the discussion which usually followed on afterwards.

## VIII

Pythagoras paid great attention to political affairs and to deal with this aspect of life a special section of the Order called the *Politici* was established. During the twenty-five years that he resided in Italy he introduced a wise political economy for the city-states of that country. Pythagoras did not approve of party

politics because, as he said, such associations tended to put their own party interests before the common good of the people as a whole. In this connection he advised his followers to avoid the use of beans. At political elections the populace would drop a bean into an urn set aside by candidates seeking votes.

When one of his followers was asked by a man how best to educate his son he replied, "Make him a citizen of a well governed state." Pythagoras once publicly declared "Man must by every means in his power dispel disease from the body and ignorance from his mind." He believed that men grew into manhood slowly and as a general guide in this matter he divided a human life into four periods which he likened to the seasons of the year. They were twenty year periods of boyhood, youth, manhood and adulthood thus making the span of human life to be eighty years in all.

During his many travels Pythagoras sometimes experienced great hardships and he was often in personal danger. At one time he was delivered into the power of Phalaris the Tyrant, a ruler of ferocious habits. Abaris, a Scythian residing at the tyrant's court praised the justly deserved fame of Pythagoras to the prince. Being secretly annoyed to hear another praised so highly, he pretended to wisdom and tolerance and caused Pythagoras to be brought before him so that he might converse with him on philosophical questions. In the meanwhile he caused a brazen bull to be made with a hollow body. In this diabolical instrument he schemed to imprison Pythagoras and slowly roast him alive by lighting a fire beneath it.

When Pythagoras arrived he was invited to speak before a large concourse of people for Phalaris planned to publicly confound and mock him before putting him to death. At the meeting the prince scorned Pythagoras, saying that his teachings were utter nonsense and his opinions on the governance of a state were dangerous and subversive. Pythagoras analysed and closely reasoned out the arguments brought forward by the prince and his natural courage and personal charm so impressed his audience with a sense of fairness that they were disgusted with the behaviour of their prince and rose up against him.

Pythagoras possessed a strange gift of physiognomy to a remarkable degree. With a swift glance he could immediately dis-

cern the characters of people who came to converse with him.

His nature was extremely sensitive, particularly towards animals and slaves. When he was a young man, being of a wealthy family, he had many slaves, all of whom he set free. He would never go near a butcher's shop for he regarded the slaughter of animals as the murder of our lesser developed fellow creatures.

He himself never received animal food, contenting himself with fruits and water with a little wine in it as his drink. Although he did not impose this custom upon his followers he advised them to dispense with an animal diet. On one occasion when he was out walking he saw a man savagely beating a dog. Moved to pity for the creature he quickly intervened saying : " Stop thrashing that poor animal. It is a faithful friend you are striking. Cannot you recognise him for such by his piteous cry ?"

## IX

Pythagoras firmly believed in the power of music for, so he said, " Rhythm subsists within the mind and the mind exerts a powerful influence over the health of the body." He frequently employed music to cure certain mental conditions and to soothe a restless mind. Once when Pythagoras was studying the stars during a walk, he came upon a youth whose mind was excited by a lively tune that was being played by a Phrygian musician. After watching for a while and perceiving the youth's antics to become wilder he told the Phrygian to play a calmer piece of music which almost at once brought the youth to an orderly frame of mind.

Every evening before retiring to rest he would play some music for the benefit of any of his friends who happened to be present, to bring them a relaxation after the toil of the day. He did not use this method for himself however. He would, as it were, fix his attention upon the celestial symphonies of the universe, for he held the opinion that everything in the universe was constructed in due proportion and with a perfect regularity, conceived in pure thoughts of Number within the mind of the Contemplator.

Music, being yet another science of proportion and movement,



he compared with the movement and proportions of the stars in their courses. This comparison he called the Harmony of the Spheres, a kind of music which could only be heard by the understanding of the mind. In his experiments he had discovered that the tone of a musical note was relative to the length of the string which had been struck. In this way he worked out the numerical progression of the musical scale and he compared this with the proportional distances of the planets and stars, thus producing within the mind the music of Nature by a comparison of relationship.

Among his many accomplishments Pythagoras possessed a deep knowledge of the medical arts. He once declared that the skill to cure disease was one of the greatest gifts a man could have. Many of his followers devoted much of their time to the study of medicine and it is to be noted that many of them reached advanced age before they died.

Democedes of Croton, the celebrated surgeon who cured the Queen of Persia from a growth in her breast was not only a close friend of Pythagoras but he was the son-in-law of Milo, an eminent and ardent Pythagorean.

The Pythagoreans spent their time in this fashion. In the early morning they went out walking alone along the shore or in the garden of Pythagoras to study the intricate secrets of the Tetractys and ponder upon its mysteries. When they returned from their morning walk they met together for breakfast. Later in the morning they would turn their attention to the health of the body. In this they used the running course, swimming and friendly bouts of wrestling. Their dinner consisted of bread, vegetables and fruit and for drink they took water for they rarely drank wine during the day.

After dinner, during the afternoon they would attend to their worldly affairs and matters of business. During this time they became men and women of mundane affairs. When evening came they would go out walking again but this time in small groups to discuss various subjects of interest.

On their return they bathed and then met together in companies of ten persons for supper. At this meal they ate bread and

such foods which are taken with bread. Those people who had not yet given up an animal diet, like Milo for example, partook of this food at supper. Wine was also taken with this meal.

When supper was finished they would then meet together in the garden of Pythagoras where the eldest member would select a reading from their manuscripts and the youngest among them would read it aloud to the company. During this time a person specially chosen would tend to the burning of a fire in a stone vessel to be a symbol to remind the company of the Spirit of Life that is ever present.

Before they retired to rest the eldest one among the company would say aloud "A mild and fruitful plant should not be wantonly destroyed neither should any creature that is harmless. We must all strive to do that which is just and right." The Pythagoreans would never destroy anything without a just cause. Trees and flowers, animals and birds were particularly loved by them.

## X

In the sixty-seventh Olympiad (510 B.C.) a revolution broke out in the neighbouring city of Sybaris. Due to intrigues arising out of party politics one section of the community rose up against the other and the people were thrown into revolution. Telys, a Sybarite of tyrannical character led an insurrection against the government and induced the people to persecute a number of their own citizens. Many of these men and women fled to Croton for refuge.

When Telys discovered this he was beside himself with rage and fiercely demanded of the Crotoniates that the refugees should be delivered into his hands. In an attempt to intimidate the people of Croton into conceding to him his demands Telys mobilised the whole Sybarite army. Consternation and panic reigned in Croton and the Senate agreed to yield to the ultimatum which the ambassador from Sybaris had just handed to them.

This news ran through the city like wildfire and eventually it was carried to Pythagoras, who for the most part resided in his



house beyond the city walls. When he received this news Pythagoras hastened to the Senate to plead with those in command of the affair not to deliver the suppliants over to certain torture and death. "If you give in to the unjust demands of tyranny," he said, "the principles of justice will be destroyed and the Constitution of the whole city will be endangered."

After a lively debate, swayed by the graceful eloquence and powerful advocacy of Pythagoras, the Senate decided to resist Telys and dismissed his ambassador with their decision. Milo of Croton took command of the army and with great care he posted his men, who were 100,000 strong, behind the river Traeis to await the enemy attack.

When Telys received the Crotoniate decision he declared war and took to the field with a huge force of over 300,000 men. The contending armies clashed at the river and after a fiercely contested battle the Sybarites were decisively defeated and within a short space of seventy days Sybaris itself was taken. So provoked were the people of Croton that they turned the course of the river Crathis upon Sybaris to flood and destroy the city.

When the campaign was successfully brought to a close and the army returned home, unrest appeared at Croton due to the public upheaval caused by the late war. Many Crotoniates were secretly envious of Milo because of his military prowess and unexampled good fortune. Moved by their jealousy these people gave their support to certain persons who were hostile to the Pythagoreans.

It is now generally admitted that these people employed a scheme to destroy the Caenobitae during the absence of Pythagoras from Croton. These troubles were brought about by Cylon, a person well known for his illustrious birth, wealth and eminent social position. He was however a man of violent temper and overbearing manners.

Being desirous of joining in the activities of the followers of Pythagoras he applied for admission. Pythagoras, who was now advanced in years, considered that his violent temperament was not suited to the life which his followers led and in view of this gently bade him to apply for admission again at a later date. When he

heard this Cylon flew into a rage and afterward became a most bitter enemy toward Pythagoras.

Carefully biding his time for revenge the opportunity came when Pythagoras sailed to Delos to give medical attention to his old boyhood friend Pherecydes who was dying. Cylon and his party immediately attacked the Caenobitae. They set fire to the house of Milo which stood next to the temple of Apollo where many of them were congregated. To avoid a public charge of impiety they did not set fire to the temple itself but by lighting up the house next door the temple was soon engulfed in flames.

Having locked the doors to the temple from outside they hoped to destroy all the Pythagoreans assembled within. Only Archippus and Lysis, both men of splendid muscular form managed to escape from the conflagration.

The public disturbances were extended to many other cities in Magna Graecia and the followers of Pythagoras were subjected to a merciless persecution which compelled them to take residence in foreign lands and to practice their wisdom and faith within the privacy of their own families and among their chosen friends. This is the reason why the Pythagorean teachings became secret and even to this day Pythagoreans are very reserved in these matters.

When Pythagoras returned to Croton from Delos he was deeply disturbed by the evidence of mob violence. Perceiving the pitiless treatment of his followers at the hands of his enemies he withdrew from Croton and retired to Metapontum with his wife Theano and their two children. It was the custom among the Caenobitae that when they had outlived the usefulness of their lives or when they were stricken down by incurable illness to choose a voluntary death. They considered it was more noble to leave this life at their own command, after they had fulfilled their duties and obligations, rather than be ushered out of it protesting against the inevitable.

Pythagoras now prepared to leave the world for a little while and in accordance with this custom he set his affairs into order. The custody of his private papers with his three works entitled, "On Nature," "On Education" and "On Statesmanship," he

entrusted to his daughter Damo with an instruction not to let them pass out of the family. Although in later days she was reduced to poverty she refused offers of large sums of money for these manuscripts. To his son Telauges he left such possessions which had survived the troubles, for he was now a poor man, with instructions concerning the work of the Order in the future.

Pythagoras, now being over eighty years of age, terminated his life by starvation after a fast lasting forty days. He was buried in the city of Metapontum during the sixty eighth Olympiad. After his death he was accorded divine honours by the Metapontines and his wife Theano was taken care of by the Senate of the city. The house in which he died was converted into a temple dedicated to the Muses and his body was buried in a beautiful grove of cypress trees in the garden of the temple.

His tomb was shown with honour and pride by the Metapontines for many hundreds of years afterwards. Cicero the Roman, when he visited that city, would not rest until he had paid homage before the tomb of Pythagoras. Many years later the Senate of Rome was directed by an Oracle to raise a monument to the memory of the wisest man who had ever lived. They erected it to the memory of Pythagoras.

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